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VERSIONS *and* PERVERSIONS *of* HEINE & OTHERS

By
G. Tyrrell

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VERSIONS *and* PERVERSIONS

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of

HEINE & OTHERS

By

G. Tyrrell

LONDON

ELKIN MATHEWS

VIGO STREET

MCMIX

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Of Versions & Perversions

THE translator is a sort of parasite in the literary body; humbly useful in his right place; mischievous and irritating out of it. Like the photographer, he is an abject in the house of Art; in it, not of it. Yet he is not always a servile hack, and has been known to work for love as well as for money, even as his betters have been known to work for money as well as for love. So far, his craft has some claim to be considered a fine and not merely a useful art. That he sometimes relishes as well as preys on the substance of literature is because he is quickened now and then by a spark of the artistic spirit too feeble to make substance for itself. Like Jacob's angels, he has no wings of his own, but like angels of the transition period, he borrows those of an eagle, and flutters about as best he may. Often in a way to make eagles and full-fledged angels weep. For if his creative power is little, his destructive power is enormous in extent and variety. Your *traductor* can be your worst traducer—*traduttore traditore*, says the Italian. In prose, he sins through mere incapacity; in verse, it is often of malice prepense. Here he is almost predestined to sin. If he is scrupulous, he libels

you like your photograph or your shadow; if he is unscrupulous—well, he is unscrupulous. Your best chance is that he may misrepresent you favourably, or not unfavourably; that his *vera effigies* may not be slanderous as well as false.

Still, if he cannot attain truth, he can aim at it by ever paring away the luxuriance of his untruthfulness. The besetting temptation of the unscrupulous translator is to sacrilegious improvements—or what he considers such. His plea is that servile fidelity renders the letter without the spirit—is mere transliteration. It is the spirit—not only the sense, but the feeling, the entire "psychosis"—that matters; and translation is a carrying over of the spirit from its own into a foreign organism of different stuff with different capacities. He is an artist, so to say, at second-hand. He treats the poet as the poet treats Nature—both big with a meaning beyond their utterance. The artist feels and guesses at what Nature would say and tries, not to say better, but to say it better. He suppresses the ignoble, accentuates the noble; completes the broken arcs, and gives us a fiction truer than fact. Should the poet complain if his translator treat him

in the same way? Has he a monopoly of impertinence? Why may not the stuff at hand—the translator's own language, imagery, rhyme and rhythm—be sometimes a better, if often a worse or more impossible, medium for the re-embodiment of the poet's spirit than that in which it was first made flesh? To catch the poem's one dominant inspiration—be it an imaginative idea or an emotion, or no more than a mood or fancy—to re-embody it as best he can in some similar or analogous form, may after all be the most essential truth of a translation—a truth of which literalism may utterly fail. For this reason, I would class a painting "after Raphael," a poem "after Tennyson," which reproduce no more than the master's mood and manner, under translations. They are certainly not originals, and who claimed them as such would be a plagiarist.

Such are the, perhaps shady, principles which are exemplified in most of the following translations, which, out of deference to usage, I prefer to call transcripts or imitations, or even versions in the loose sense that includes perversions and conversions. Only in the case of Théophile Gautier and Francesco dall' Ongaro have I aimed at stricter literalism. The *Stornelli*

of the latter are rendered line for line and in the original form, save for the substitution of a decasyllabic for the almost impossible hendecasyllabic line.

Like most theories, worth anything, mine has been invented for the emergency, to conceal difficulties and justify irregularities.

Is it necessary to explain, solemnly, that these translations, so-called, are not my spiritual autobiography, the utterance of my profoundest sentiments and convictions? If the poet may be suspected (unjustly, if he be a true artist) of making public confessions, the translator at least should be exempt. If his selection indicates a sympathy, it is a sympathy of understanding, not necessarily of agreement. The poems have been selected solely as happy utterances of an idea, feeling or mood for which the translator wished to find as happy an utterance in his own language, and not for the religious, ethical or philosophical values of what they utter—at most, for its human value.

Much song is from the surface rather than from the depths of the soul. Like fungus on a tree it has roots of its own, but they are not the roots of the tree.

This is a sudden crop—with two exceptions the growth of a few weeks. G. T

I

Versions & Perversions *of* Heine

In mein gar zu dunkeln Leben

(*Heine*)

ONCE on my life's too sullen day
A sunbeam stole, a vision bright;
The vision since has fled away
And left me wholly wrapt in night.

When children mid the darkness tread,
From very fear their hearts stand still;
And yet to show they have no dread,
They sing aloud and whistle shrill.

So, like a foolish child, I sing
Here in the ever-deepening shade;
The song may be a sorry thing,
But still it makes me less afraid.

Das gelbe Laub erzittert

(*Heine*)

THE yellow foliage shivers,
The leaves are scattered round;
And all that's fair and lovely
Falls withered to the ground.

Above the forest tree-tops
The sickly sunbeams play,—
The farewell kiss of Summer
That tears itself away.

Das gelbe Laub erzittert

It seems to melt a fountain
Of tears that freeze my heart,
This image of the moment
In which we had to part,

In which I had to leave you
And felt you soon must die;
You were the fading forest,
The parting Summer, I.

Ich stand in dunkeln Traumen

(*Heine*)

IN dreamy grief I stood,
And o'er her picture wept;
Across the well-loved face,
Life like a shadow crept.

Wreathing the quiet lips
A trance-like smile appears;
The eyes begin to shine
As if with Pity's tears.

And then my own well up,
And down my cheeks they pour;
I can't, I can't believe
She's gone for evermore.

Wie kannst du ruhig schlafen ?

(*Heine*)

AND can you sleep in quiet
While I live on in pain,
And the rebel wrath re-wakens
To shake the bars again?

Have you heard the old-world ballad,
How once a lover who died
At midnight came for his darling
And dragged her down to his side?

Wonder of form and beauty!
Oh, trust me, child, when I say:
If the dead are strong, far stronger
Am I who live than they.

Die Lotosblume ängstigt.

(*Heine*)

THE lotus-flower in anguish bides
The sun in splendour bright;
She bows her head, her face she hides
And dreams of coming night.

Die Lotosblume ängstigt

The Moon, her love, with gentler rays
To break her sleep prevails;
Before him her adoring gaze
She lovingly unveils.

Her cup with glowing radiance fills,
She mutely looks above;
And breathing incense weeps and thrills
With joys and pangs of love.

Du schönes Fischermädchen

(*Heine*)

MY pretty fisher maiden,
Pull in your boat to the land,
And come and sit beside me,
And we'll gossip hand in hand.

And lean your head on my heart, dear,
And have no fear of me,
You who are fearless daily
In the face of the angry sea.

For my heart is just like the sea, dear,
With its storm and ebb and flow,
And with many a precious pearl, dear,
In its quiet depths below.

Und wüsten's die Blumen die kleine

(*Heine*)

If the little blossoms could only know
What a wound in my heart I bear,
They would weep along with me over my woe
And bandage me up with care.

And if the Nightingales only knew
How sadly I bear my pain,
They would gladly whistle a tune or two
To liven me up again.

If the golden twinkling stars but knew
How I sit in a corner and mope,
They'd slide from the sky like drops of dew
And whisper a word of hope.

And yet not one of them all can know,
For one only knows my pain;
'Tis she herself who has wounded me so
And has cleft my heart in twain.

Eingehüllt in grauen Wolken

(*Heine*)

SNUGLY wrapped in cloudy blankets
Sleep the gods of other ages;
Hark! I hear them gently snoring
While the angry tempest rages.

Angry tempest, stormy billow
Threat the ship with wild disaster;
None is left the winds to bridle,
None is left the waves to master.

Helpless I to quell the tempest;
Masts may break and ribs be shattered;
Godlike in my cloak I wrap me,
Snoring as if nothing mattered.

Sie haben mich gequälet

(*Heine*)

THEY'VE plagued and provoked me,
Both early and late;
These with their love, and
Those with their hate.

They've poisoned my cup, and
They've poisoned my plate;
These with their love, and
Those with their hate.

Sie haben mich gequälet

Yet most have they plagued and
  Provoked me to spleen,
Who nor hated nor loved me,
  But something between.

Dass ich dich liebe, O Moepschen

(*Heine*)

THAT I truly love you, O Mopsy,
  You perfectly understand;
For whenever I feed you with sugar,
  You answer by licking my hand.

A doggie is all you set up for,
  Nor feign to be more than a beast;
But a human friend must ever pretend
  To be superhuman at least.

Teurer Freund, du bist verliebt

(*Heine*)

DEAR friend you're in love it is plain,
And a new brood of troubles you wake up;
Illusions will darken your brain,
But your heart will grow brighter to make up.

Dear friend you're in love it is plain,
And though you will never own to it,
Yet your waistcoat protects you in vain
For the flame in your bosom shines through it.

Nacht lag auf meinen Augen

(*Heine*)

MY eyes were sealed with darkness,
My lips were sealed with lead;
With frozen vein and heart and brain
I lay in my churchyard bed.

How long I had lain I know not,
So deathlike had I slept,
When I heard a sound as if over-ground
One knocked at my grave and wept.

Nacht lag auf meinen Augen

Oh, won't you get up, my Henry,
'Tis the dawn of the final day;
And the dead are all out and walking about
In the joys that shall last for aye.

I cannot get up, my darling,
And I cannot see the day,
For with endless weeping, awake and sleeping,
My eyes are wasted away.

I will kiss your eyes, my Henry,
I will kiss the night from your eyes,
And show you the sight of the angels bright,
And the glory above the skies.

I cannot get up, my darling,
For the blood still drips and drips
From the place in my heart where you fixed a dart
With a poisoned word from your lips.

On your bleeding heart, O Henry,
My hand I will softly lay;
And though wounded sore it will bleed no more,
And its pain shall be done away.

I cannot get up, my darling,
For my brain is bleeding too,
From a wound it got by a pistol-shot,
When a rival robbed me of you.

Nacht lag auf meinen Augen

With the hair of my head, O Henry,
I'll staunch the wound in your brain,
And stem the flood of the ruby blood,
And make you all sound again.

I could say her nay no longer,
So fondly she did entreat;
And I strove with pain to get up again,
And fall at my darling's feet.

But straight like an angry torrent,
As I struggled, my wounds outbrake;
From brain and breast the red stream pressed,
And, lo!—I was wide awake!

Der Hirtenknabe

(*Heine*)

A KING is the shepherd lad,
With a grassy hill for his throne,
And the sun right over his head,
To serve for a golden crown.

At his feet the raddled sheep,
Mild flattering courtiers bide,
And his knights are the weanling calves
That strut with a conscious pride.

Der Hirtenknabe

And the kids are his court buffoons,
  And the birds and the grazing kine,
With their flutings and tinkling bells,
  As court musicians combine.

And so sweet the jangle and song,
  And so mingles a burden deep
Of cascades and wind in the pines,
  That the king goes nodding asleep.

So his minister takes the reins
  While the monarch is slumber-bound,
The dog whose rasping bark
  Wakes all the echoes around.

And the monarch drowsily mutters,
  "The state is a load of care,
And I wish I were home already
  With my queen, who is waiting me there.

"In her queenly arms is a quiet
  Where my royal head may repose;
In her two pretty eyes is a kingdom
  Whose boundary no man knows."

Der arme Peter

(*Heine*)

HANS and Gretchen spin round in the reel,
With noisy laughter and talk,
In a corner stands Peter, silent and still,
And white as a bit of chalk.

Hans and Gretchen are bridegroom and bride,
Ablaze in their wedding togs;
Gnawing his nails, Peter shrinks aside
In his workday smock and his clogs.

He looks with a troubled eye on the two,
And mutters low as they pass:
"I could gladly do what I'd after rue,
Were I something more of an ass.

"Within my bosom there sits a woe
That bursts my heart asunder;
Wherever I go, no rest I know,
For it drives me here and yonder.

"To my darling Gretchen it forces me nigh,
As though she could heal the pain,
But as soon as ever I meet her eye
It hurries me off again.

Der arme Peter

"I scale the heights of a neighbouring hill,
To be all alone on the steep,
And there, where all is silent and still,
I silently stand and weep."

* * * * *

There goes Peter tottering by,
Deadly pale and slow and shy;
People in the thoroughfare,
As they meet him, stop and stare.

Whispering wenches nudge and say,
"See, he's left his grave to-day."
"No young ladies, I'm afraid;
In his grave he's just been laid."

"Since his treasure he has lost,
That's the place that fits him most;
There he best may lay his head
Till the trumpet wake the dead."

Mein Kind wir waren Kinder

(*Heine*)

MY child, when we were children,
Two little children gay,
We used to creep into the hen-coop,
And hide ourselves in the hay.

And then we would crow as the cocks do;
And when the folk came by
And heard our "Cock-a-doodle!"
"'Tis a cock, for sure!" they'd cry.

In the yard we found some boxes,
And paper inside we laid,
And there we dwelt together,
And a famous house it made.

The old cat of our next-door neighbour
A visit frequently paid;
We met her with bows and curtsies
And compliments stiff and staid.

And we'd hope, with an anxious interest,
She was feeling better again.
We've made the same observations
To many old cats since then.

Mein Kind wir waren Kinder

And we sat and talked like our elders,
And the praise of the past we sung,
And lamented how everything round us
Went better when we were young.

How Faith, Love and Trust had departed,
And left the whole world to despair;
How coffee was so much dearer,
And money so much more rare.

But the plays of childhood are over,
And everything hurries to dust,
The world and money and old times,
And love and faith and trust.

Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar

(*Heine*)

THE mother stood at the window,
The boy lay on his bed;
"Won't you get up, my Willie,
And see the procession?" she said.

"Oh, I am sick, dear mother;
I can neither hear nor see,
For I think of my buried Gretchen,
And the heart is broken in me."

Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar

"Take your prayerbook and your chaplet,
And for Kevlaar let us start,
The Mother of God is able
To heal the broken of heart."

The church's banners are waving,
There rises a chant divine,
As streams the long procession
Through Köln upon the Rhine.

Leading her son, the mother
Follows the company,
And both of them join in the chorus:
"Gelobt sei du Marie."

The Mother of God at Kevlaar
Is clad in her very best;
And the sick in their crowds are coming
And to-day she will have no rest.

And the sick are bearing with them
Their votive offerings mete,
Their waxen limbs and members,
Their waxen hands and feet.

And a waxen hand who offers
Is healed of a wounded hand,
And a waxen foot who offers
Is able again to stand.

Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar

To Kevlaar went many on crutches,
  Who now tread the rope mid-air,
And many now play the 'cello
  Whose fingers were mended there.

The mother took a wax taper
  And shaped it into a heart:
"Take that to the Blessed Mother,
  And she will heal thy smart."

With sighs he took the wax heart,
  To the image he went with sighs,
And the prayer burst forth from his bosom
  As the tears burst forth from his eyes.

"O thou, supremely blessed,
  God's ever spotless maid,
Who reignest as Queen of Heaven,
  To thee my vows be paid.

I lived along with my mother
  In Köln close at hand,
The town where in their hundreds,
  Churches and chapels stand.

And near to us lived my Gretchen,
  But she is dead, and I'm left alone;
O Mary, take this wax heart,
  And heal the wound in my own.

Die Wallfahrt nach Kevlaar

O heal my heart of its sorrow,
And early and late to thee
I'll fervently sing in thy honour,
'Gelobt sei du Marie.'"

* * * * *

As the sick boy near his mother
In their little chamber slept,
The Mother of God she entered,
And softly, softly she stept.

She bowed o'er the boy and lightly
Her hand on his heart did lay,
And then with a look of pity,
She smiled and vanished away.

All this and more the mother
Beheld in a dream profound,
Then started up from her slumber
To the mournful bay of the hound.

Stretched on the bed beside her,
Her son lay quiet and dead;
On his wan and pallid features
Played the light of the morning red.

And then her hands she folded;
Nor wherefore well knew she,
But sang devoutly and softly:
"Gelobt sei du Marie."

Berg-idyll

(*Heine*)

I

IN a cot, far up the mountain,
Dwells the woodman grey and old;
Pine-trees rustle, and the moonbeams
Bathe the earth in mists of gold.

In the cot stands, quaintly fashioned,
Quaintly carved, an easy chair;
In it sits a lucky beggar—
'Tis myself am sitting there.

At my knee, upon a footstool,
Sits a little maiden close;
Twin blue stars her eyes that sparkle,
And her mouth a damask rose.

And the dear blue stars orb wider
With a mystery to disclose,
And she lays a lily finger
Archly on the damask rose.

No, she's far too busy spinning,
Mother sees us not nor hears;
Father sings and strums the zither,
Lost in songs of bygone years."

Berg-idyll

Softly, in a stifled murmur,
Scarcely could I catch the sound,
To my ear she then confided
Many a mystery profound.

"But, since Auntie died," she ended,
"Never can we spend a day
In the fortress town of Goslar
With its sights so brave and gay.

"Here upon the chilly summits
Life is dreary, days are slow,
And we pass dark months of winter
All but buried in the snow.

"And I am a timid creature;
Like a child I live in fright,
Scared by wicked mountain spirits
Stalking restless all the night."

Shuddering at the words she uttered,
Suddenly she stops aghast;
Pressing tight her hands before them,
Both her eyes she closes fast.

Outside roar the pines still louder,
And the spinwheel whirs and hums,
And a scrap of some old ditty
From the twanging zither comes.

Berg-idyll

"Tremble not, dear little maiden,
  At the wicked spirit's might;
Angels guard thee, little maiden,
  Watching o'er thee day and night."

II

With its fingers green the pine-tree
  Taps the lower window-pane,
And the moon, eavesdropping slily,
  Floods us both in golden rain.

Father, mother, gently snoring,
  Close at hand their slumber take;
We, two happy chattering magpies,
  Keep each other wide awake.

"That you say your prayers too often
  Hardly to believe I dare,
For that twitching at the corners
  Of your lips goes ill with prayer.

"Yes, that twitch, so cold and mocking,
  Fills me every time with pain,
Till your eyes, with kindly glances,
  Set my heart at rest again.

"Do you hold what all men hold to?
  That is what I wonder most;
Have you faith in God the Father,
  In the Son and Holy Ghost?"

Berg-idyll

"Ah, my child, when I was little,
When by mother's knee I stood,
I believed in God the Father,
Mighty Monarch, great and good.

"Who had made the earth all glorious,
And the glorious men thereon,
Who their courses had appointed
To the stars and moon and sun.

"When I grew a trifle older,
Other things I soon perceived;
Reason came and understanding,
On the Son I next believed.

"That dear Son whose love has shown us
Love's own self as nothing can;
And for thanks, as mostly happens,
On a cross was nailed by man.

"Older now and having pondered,
Having read as much as most,
Swells my heart and with it wholly
I confess the Holy Ghost.

"He has done the mightiest wonders,
Mightier will He do again;
He has crushed the tyrant's stronghold,
He has snapped the bondsman's chain.

Berg-idyll

"And He heals man's ancient death-wounds,
And renews the older Right;
Equal born, the sons of Adam
Stand as peers before His sight.

"He dispels the noisome vapour,
Drives the brain-spun ghost away
That maligns all love and pleasure,
Grinning at us night and day.

"Thousands are the Knights He chooses,
And He arms them with His might,
And He fills their hearts with courage,
And they battle for the right.

"And their goodly blades are flashing,
And their glorious banners wave.
Darling, would you like to see them,
All the knights so proud and brave?

"Well then, look on me, my darling;
Kiss me, look, and don't be shy.
Even such a knightly warrior
Of the Holy Ghost am I."

II
Versions & Perversions *of* Others

L'Art

(*Théophile Gautier*)

YES, the work tells,
When stuff to Art's assault
Rebels—
Verse, onyx, marble, smalt.

Feigned bands abjure;
But, if thou wouldst, O Muse,
Tread sure,
The tighter buskin choose.

Shame! metric ties,
Loose as a pair of shoes,
Of size
That great or small can use.

Sculptor, hold nought
The easily moulded clay,
Thumb-wrought,
With wandering mind astray.

Carrara take,
And Parian hard and fine,
And make
Them grip the clean outline.

L'Art

Fetch bronze to cast
From Syracuse, and there
Fix fast
The features proudly fair.

With faultless hand
On agate flake cut clear,
Command
Apollo to appear.

* * * *

All turns to dust;
All but what art can save;
The bust
Lives in the city's grave.

Dug from earth's night,
The medal sternly wrought
To light
An Emperor has brought.

Gods that have died,
From memory doomed to pass,
Abide
In verse outliving brass.

Limn, carve and cast;
Thy dreams that float in space
Stamp fast
On matter's stubborn face.

La Vase Brisée

(*Sully Prudhomme*)

YON vase of vervain dead and dried
Was cracked by chance the other day;
A fan but lightly grazed its side,
No mischief did the sound betray.

But hour by hour the rift so slight
Its stealthy way did slowly eat
All round the glass, unmarked by sight,
Until the circle was complete.

And drop by drop its fount ran dry;
The sapless flowers all languish there,
And none can guess the reason why;
'Tis broken; touch it not; take care!

Grazed lightly by some hand adored,
The heart its little rift will hide,
Then slowly of its own accord
Breaks, and its love hangs dead and dried.

That lancet wound, so fine, so deep,
No eye discerned its presence there,
It felt it widen, felt it weep,
'Tis broken, touch it not; take care!

Ah si vous saviez

(*Sully Prudhomme*)

AH, if you knew how much I mourn
My lonely hearth, my lonely lot,
Sometimes your steps aside you'd turn
To pass my cot.

Ah, if the joy you only knew,
Born to the soul from one pure glance,
Passing my window, you'd look through
As if by chance.

Ah, if you knew what balsam sweet
Heart upon neighbouring heart can pour,
Then, sister-like, you'd take your seat
Before my door.

Ah, if you knew what love I bore,
And if you only knew how great,
I think you'd simply push the door
And enter straight.

Ames et Corps

(*Sully Prudhomme*)

O HAPPY lips of living flesh,
In kisses you can meet at will;
O breasts that draw the breezes fresh,
Your separate sighs can mingle still.

O happy hearts whose blood runs warm,
Each can the other's throbs divine;
And living arm with living arm
Can meet and fondly intertwine.

And touch meets touch and eye meets eye;
O happy bodies warmed by breath;
They are at peace when down they lie,
And they are Nothing after death.

But souls have bitter cause to mourn,
For they can never meet, alas!
Like lantern-flames they seem to burn,
Each walled from each by thickened glass.

And from their prisons half opaque
Flame unto flame in vain they call;
They feel some sense of kinship wake,
But cannot mix and feel it all.

Ames et Corps

These souls "immortal" men proclaim;
Immortal? Better last one day
And only one, so flame with flame
Might mix and burn and die away.

Le Doute

(*Sully Prudhomme*)

DEEP in this darksome well lives Truth in raiment white;
Men mostly shun its brink, or heedless pass it by;
Drawn by an austere love, alone the quest I try;
And down I swing myself to plunge in blackest night.
The cable fast uncoils, and runs its length outright.
I hang and sway and search if aught I can descry;
I stretch a groping arm and strain a baffled eye,
But nothing stays my hand and nothing meets my sight.
And though I hear her breathe, and know she's there full well,
Yet like a pendulum, attracted by her spell,
Eternally I pass and backward pass in vain.
And can I never stretch this cord on which I sway?
Nor climb again to greet the luring light of day?
And must I oscillate in everlasting pain?

The Larger Faith

(*After "In Memoriam."*)

If e'er I prayed while yet a child
  For ever in Thy courts to dwell,
  The crumbling walls from round me fell
And left me shivering on the wild.

Then wider courts I raised again
  And fondly dreamt to hold Thee there;
  But Thou, whose house is everywhere,
Unless Thou build, man builds in vain.

Forgive the thoughts that once confined
  Thy Boundlessness in swaddling bands;
  Forgive the temples made with hands;
Forgive the idols of the mind.

Enough, enough, one glimmering spark
  From worlds beyond this world of Night;
  Forgive, O Sun and Source of light,
A foolish child that feared the dark.

Susse heilige Natur

(*Von Stolberg*)

MOTHER Nature, dear though dread,
Teach my feet thy ways to tread;
As a child that cries and clings
Hold me fast in leading strings.

When from weariness I weep
Let me to thy bosom creep;
Hang upon thy breast and there
Drink thy sweet and cooling air.

Ah! 'tis good to feel thee near;
Dear and ever yet more dear,
Teach me in thy ways to tread
Mother Nature, dear though dread.

Mein Hertz ich will dich fragen*

(*Halm*)

COME, tell me what love is,
O heart, I entreat!
Two souls and one vision,
Two hearts and one beat.

And say where it comes from?
If it comes it was there.
And say where it flies to?
What fled, love was ne'er.

And when is love purest?
When self is asleep.
And when is love deepest?
Most still is most deep.

And when is love richest?
When it gives its last crumb.
And what is love's language?
It loves and is dumb.

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Ergebung

(*Sallet*)

PUT out my eyes; but when you've done
See if you can put out the sun;
Thrust me in gaol and turn the key,
Freedom shall win, nor fails with me.

Fetter these hands that wield the pen—
The sword most feared by knavish men;
Some hand, some pen renews the strife
While throbs one heart for God and Life.

What tho' my fire-touched lips were dumb,
Sealed in the darkness of the tomb;
Ten thousand voices thunder loud;
Shall mine be missed in such a crowd?

You think the Spring is dead of course,
Its light, its song, its sap, its force,
Because your stupid hands prevail
To strangle one poor nightingale.

Ferrara: Tasso's Cell

(*Lamartine*)

TO martyrdom is Genius born, be it of man or God,
Yet they who strike it now in scorn, will later kiss the rod;
And man at last adores the cross of him whom man had slain,
And decks with gold the prison walls where Tasso pined in vain.

O Cell of Tasso here! O cell where Galileo wept!
O martyrs' scaffold, cross and rack! O graves where Truth has slept!
Tis ye,'tis ye who prove our right to hold the crowd for nought
Which seeks from God the gift of light and hates the light it sought.

Free in a world where none are free, and great where none are great,
If Genius must expire at last, it well deserves its fate;
For ever at their city gates men plant the cross erect,
To monish Truth and Glory of the doom they must expect.

Ferrara: Tasso's Cell

Not slacker, then, but tenser should their arm be nerved for strife,
And grasp the proffered honour, though the cost be more than life;
Their blood and tears are but the oil that keeps the lamp alight,
Which God has bid them bear before the wanderers of the night.

First Snow

("Erster Schnee."—*Moritz Hartmann*)

LIGHTLY on branches, late with green bedecked,
Falls the first snow;
Heavy on hearts that dreamt of skies unflecked,
Falls the first woe.

The sun unsheathes a kindly, conquering beam;
The snow is gone.
Joy strikes the heart with many an after gleam;
The woe lives on.

Zwei Kammern hat das Herz

(*Neumann*)

TWO chambers hath the heart,
Wherein do dwell
Sorrow and Joy apart.

When in the one Joy wakes,
Then in the other
Sorrow her slumber takes.

Hush, Joy, Oh hush, refrain;
Laugh not too loud,
Lest Sorrow wake again.

Was schreibt die Woge in den Sand?

(*R. Gottschall*)

WHAT scribbles the wave in the faithless sand?
A record brief of its endless woe;
Of onward rush and backward throw
For a second of rest on the longed-for land.

Was schreibt die Woge in den Sand?

And I who gaze out on the sea to-day,
Fond hopes, fair loves my tale would tell;
I have written it in the sand as well,
For the tumbling billows to wash away.

Das Meer von Hoffnung

(*Ruckert*)

HOPE after hope to dust has gone,
And yet the heart hopes blindly on;
Wave upon wave has toppled o'er,
Yet heaves the ocean evermore.

Waves leap and fall, again to leap,
Heart-pulsings of the undaunted deep;
Hopes come again, again depart,
Wild surgings of the undaunted heart.

As heavenward shoots the ocean spray,
Man's heart-dreams upward wing their way;
And dreams from dreams burst forth again,
As spray from spray in finer rain.

SELECTIONS from the *Stornelli Politici* of Francesco dall' Ongaro (1808—1873), a poet of the Italian Risorgimento, whose spirit he has embodied in these commemorations of its various typical incidents.

The regular *Stornello* consists of ten or twelve hendecasyllabic lines, of which the first six rhyme alternately, the remainder being couplets. In the translations I have been forced to use decasyllabic lines.

Il Brigidino

(Siena, Aug. 4, 1847)

[Like many of the *Stornelli*, this plays with the symbolism of the Italian tricoleur.]

FROM Sienna comes my lover back again
And brings me the cockade of red and white.
White, for the faith that binds him as a chain;
Red, for the joy that sets our heart alight;
To these I add a sprig of fresh vervain
That I have fed with waters pure and bright.

I'll tell him that the red and green and white
Befit the man who girds his sword for fight.
I'll tell him that the white and green and red
Mean Italy throws off her yoke of lead.
I'll tell him the white and red and green
For gamesters bold the winning colours mean.

Alto Tradimento

(Florence, Sept. 12, 1847)

[At this time the praise of the Liberal Pope was in many places treated as a political crime.]

OH what a goodly show of banners proud!
A thousand fashions and a thousand dyes!
Each as it passes hailed and cheered aloud
Mid fronds and blossoms show'ring from the skies.
Yet one is missing from the stately crowd,
One banner sought in vain by eager eyes.

Poor banner! and poor him who wrought the same!
He's gone to Parma in the garb of shame.
Thrust in the dark, his hands are tied behind
Because a bust of Peter he designed.
Thrust in the dark, no respite shall his woe know,
And all for crying Viva Pio Nono!

L'Emissario

(Lucca, Sept., 1847)

TAKE back your quattrini—away! away!
Be off, I will die an old maid, I say;
'Tis no Roman coin, but the traitor's florin;
I can see quite well that the writing is foreign.
They gave it you, yes; but for ends of their own
For the ruin of Lucca our lovely town.
You've sold yourself to their base design;
No traitor shall ever be husband of mine;
You've lost your good name and broken my heart,
In a traitor I'll neither have lot nor part.

Il Cannone

(Genoa, Nov. 8, 1847)

[When the Genoese women sold their jewels to present two cannon to the National Guard of Rome.]

O FURNACE let thy fierce transmuting flame
Our luxury's gold to warlike metal turn.
To yield our jewels to our country's claim
And not to feasts and dances now we learn.
Nor pearl nor coral fringes earn the name
In history that our fathers once did earn.

Il Cannone

These treasures brought our foe in quest of prey;
These treasures now shall drive that foe away.
He for whom hearth and home are sacred things
Will love us more without our chains and rings;
And when the foe to rob our treasure runs,
Matrons of Rome! we'll point him to our sons.

La Decorazione

(Rome, 1847)

MY Love how grand he looks in helm and crest!
To fight he went and never turned to flee;
One blow he got which struck him on the breast;
For one he got he duly rendered three;
And now he's back, the bravest of the best,
He loved me true and he has married me.

As he goes by and every one makes way
I thank my God who let me see this day;
As he goes by he seems to me more grand
Than any gartered knight in all the land;
The knight has worn his crosses from his birth;
My lover's cross, I know what it is worth.

Italia Libera

(Florence, Sept., 1847)

TO Pisa on its way the boat has gone
Carrying the song that sings of colours three;
Lisa shall sing it to me later on;
The angel of my earliest love is she.
I'll tell her that when I those colours don
Brightest and first of all the red shall be.

Red is my blood; for liberty alone
It shall be poured, and not for any throne.
For the true Italy it shall be shed
That hails one banner and, in Christ, one head.

La Bandiera

(Siena, Oct., 1847)

[The banner worked by the Sienese women for the National Guard.]

OUR hands have stitched it all with thread of gold;
At every stitch our hearts sent forth a sigh;
Italy's angel, eager to behold,
Leant o'er the bastion of the starry sky;
Italy's angel and the blessed fold
Of generous souls that dared for her to die.

La Bandiera

Husbands and brothers draw your swords and fight
Beneath this banner to defend our right;
Think of the hearts that for your glory sigh;
Think of the angel leaning from the sky.

La Camelia Toscana

(Florence, 1847)

[The Tuscan colours were red and white; the added green completed the Italian tricoleur.]

FAIR flower prinked out in dainty white and red,
Cowering between two verdant leaves from view,
Say, from what land you have in exile fled;
And say what season paints your perfect hue.

Whence I have wandered hither, why demand?
The land that holds me is my native land.
Nor ask what season dyes me with its breath;
Once born, I have no further fear of death.
Once born, no blight for me in spring-time lies
Hope's colour is a green that never dies.

La Livornese

(Livorno, Oct., 1847)

FAREWELL, Livorno, and farewell my home ;
Perchance I'll see no more this plot of land.
Father and mother slumber in the tomb ;
Under the flag my lover takes his stand,
Him I will follow even to the doom ;
I, too, can hold a weapon in my hand.

Between my lover and the deadly dart
Unknown I'll step to shield him with my heart ;
And bending o'er his dying comrade, he,
All pitiful, will try my face to see.
You'll try to see my face and then you'll know !
What tears, Poor Lover, ah, what tears of woe !

La Donna Lombarda

(Milan, Jan., 1848)

[Refers to the first Milanese victims of Austrian violence.]

TAKE from my sight these coloured robes so gay ;
Sad be the hue of all that greets my eyes.
I've seen blood streaming and I've heard to-day
The cry of him who smites and him who dies.
Henceforth I fling all ornament away
Save one red ribbon on my heart that lies.

La Donna Lombarda

They'll ask me whence my ribbon got its dye.
"Bathed in my brother's blood," I shall reply.
They'll ask if ought to cleanse it may avail;
"Rivers and seas," I'll say, "would not prevail.
Honour defiled water would wash in vain;
Nothing but German blood deletes that stain."

Il Po

(Rome, Feb., 1848)

[During the festivities in Piedmont, the battle was raging lower down the river.]

ITALY hath a river called the Po,
Fed in her Alps, disgorging in her sea.
Mid songs and bonfires first its waters flow,
And then mid flames and shouts of enmity.
Feeling that foes are nigh it murmurs low:
Hence by some other course I fain would flee.

It cannot, though it would, retrace its track;
No king, no river, ever may turn back.
On then, fair river, swiftly to the sea,
On to thy Adriatic estuary.
Swell up and whelm in thy torrential flow
The perjured monarch and the foreign foe.
Swell up and whelm in thy avenging stream
Italy's foes that are and friends that seem.

L'Esule Slava

(Florence, March, 1848)

WHAT care I for these sports? these songs I hear?
This sky, this sun, they are not mine, I say.
Where are my church, my patron saints so dear?
My mother-tongue in which I learnt to pray?
Who mourns my sorrow with me tear for tear?
Who answers smile for smile when I am gay?

Land of my heart! where I was born and bred;
I love thy mosses and thy lichens red.
O pleasant air my infant lips have kissed,
I love your cold embrace, your frosty mist.
Poor Heart! from all thy loves thus rudely torn
Who doomed thee here in Paradise to mourn?

Lo Sposo Italiano

(Venice, March, 1848)

WHEN first in white I saw you veiled around,
I knelt to you as snowy Candour's Queen.
When with green bands I saw your tresses bound,
I hailed the Hope on which my heart might lean.
When on your gentle breast a rose I found,
My ardent longing for you burnt more keen.

But when you wore at once those colours three,
My country's Hope I said you thence should be;
And when I found your heart Italian too,
My Faith, my Hand, I gave them both to you.

La Nuova Usilia

(Siena, 1848)

[A Sienese amazon named Usilia had formerly at the battle of Mont'Aperto taken many prisoners.]

WHEN, gun in hand, my gallant man departs,
It is not at the spinning-wheel I'll be;
But casting lead to lodge it in the hearts
Of those who want a German Tuscany;
They'll bind him in the prison's deepest parts,
But two by two I'll bind them tight as he.

And if they say to me: Oh, set us free;
I'll make them first cry: Long live Italy!
Viva l'Italia! they first shall cry,
And go and find themselves a bail or die.

Il Disertore

(Bologna, May, 1848)

NO ear of corn springs from the frost-bound earth;
Buds on a withered branch who thinks to find?
If you love not the soil that shoots you forth,
'Tis that your sterile heart a frost doth bind;
If you love not your ancient land of birth,
What love is left in you for all mankind?

To your own country if you are not true,
God help the girl who puts her trust in you!
God help the man who grasps a traitor's hand!
No ear of corn springs from a frost-bound land.
Who trusts a renegade must needs be blind;
Buds on a withered branch who thinks to find?

Pio Nono

(Rome, 1848)

[To those who stigmatized as superstitious the enthusiasm of New Italy for Pius IX.]

PIO NONO 'tis not he (need we explain?)
Who from his throne chops crosses in the air;
Pio Nono is a figment of our brain,
As idol of our heart, a vision fair.
Pio Nono is a banner, a refrain,
A name for choruses that rend the air.

Pio Nono

"Long live Pope Pius!" in the streets of Rome
Means "Long live amnesty!" and "Long live home!"
And "Long live home and amnesty!" who cry,
Mean that for Italy they'll gladly die.
They'll die, not for an empty name alone,
Not for a Pope they'll die, not for a throne!

C'era una Volta

(Rome, 1849)

ONCE on a time there lived a King and Queen;
Merely to see them filled the poor with bread.
Full-fed and gaily clad they reigned serene,
All for their kingdom's happiness, they said.
And when the folk for lack of bread grew lean,
What? cried the King, Eat chickens then instead.

All the king likes he does or leaves undone,
We are but made for shadows to his sun.
As the King likes, 'tis war or peace to-day,
We are but made to go beneath the clay.
But night is past and dawn is near its prime,
There lived a King and Queen—*once on a time!*

Costanza

(Venice, 1849)

MID cannon-thunder first I saw the light;
"Constance" my father called me newly-born,
Trusting in God, defender of the Right,
Who from dead seed calls forth the waving corn;
Seasons go by and days pass into night,
Italy's hope is one perpetual morn.

Slowly it springs and slowlier still matures
The Ilex that for centuries endures;
The lashing storm strips off its leaves in vain,
The storm goes by, the leaves return again.

Spinte o Sponte

(Florence, April, 1862)

BID or forbid, the flames to heaven essay;
Bid or forbid, the torrent downward flows;
Bid or forbid, when angry lightnings play,
The rocks are split, the blazing mansion glows;
Bid or forbid, along its destined way
Or earth or sun or people ever goes.

Peter's successor! is it then your will
To turn us back? to make the sun stand still?
Watch over Holy Church is all we ask;
Bid or forbid, we must complete our task;
Bid or forbid, our tryst at Rome we'll keep,
Nor at the Mountain's Foot consent to sleep.

W. H. Smith & Son, Arden Press, Letchworth, and
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